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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the growing assumption that the theories and approaches of the Silent Way, Counseling-Learning, Total Physical Response, Comprehension Training, and Suggestopedia deal with trivial issues rather than with the primary substance of language teaching and learning examines the question of rigorous scientific experimentation with methods and the limitations of certain types of experiments, the importance of the uniform emphasis on the affective component, the issue of attitudinal problems as separate from cognitive tactics in learning, and the accepted validity of the psycho- and sociolinguistic premises underlying these methods. It is proposed that the recognition of and compensation for the failure-orientation of language students may logically precede concern with the more currently respectable issues of curriculum development and language program design. The attention given to overcoming negative attitudes and experiences is seen as an essential, basic, and nontrivial component of the entire language pedagogy situation, and vital to the teaching profession. (MSE)

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IN DEFENSE OF INNOVATIVE METHODS*

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing assumption that the theories and approaches of the Silent Way, Counseling-Learning, TPR, Comprehension Training, and Suggestopedia deal with trivial issues rather than with the primary substance of language teaching and learning. A denial not of seriousness but of validity is being heard increasingly. Richards has called for "accountability and evaluation" through rigorous scientific experimentation, seen as the only alternative to the "unsubstantiated and often irrelevant claims" of supporters of these approaches to syllabus and instruction. Scovel, Maley, Richards, and others express serious reservations about these methods and approaches, citing lack of universal applicability, of data-based evidence of gain, and of reasonableness. This paper discusses the question of experimentation with methods and the limitations of certain types of experiment; the importance of the uniform emphasis on the affective component; the issue of attitudinal problems as separate from cognitive tactics in learning; and the accepted validity of the psycho- and sociolinguistic premises underlying these methods. The recognition of and compensation for the failure-orientation of language students may logically precede concern with the more currently respectable issues of curriculum development and language program design. The attention given to overcoming negative attitudes and experiences is seen as an essential, basic, and nontrivial component of the entire language pedagogy gestalt, vital to the teaching profession.

IN DEFENSE OF INNOVATIVE METHODS

Describing the language learner in a "new perspective," Muneo Yoshikawa says in a recent article that "Without understanding this assumption of the holistic individual as essentially an active, voluntary, responsible, self-motivating, relational, autonomous, and free being, mere methodologies or techniques are reduced to artificial and mechanical schemes that fail to be meaningful" (1982:394). There are a lot of facets to Yoshikawa's holistic individual. One wonders whether Science can deal with such a complicated creature?

The fact is that science has become an important issue lately vis-à-vis the instructional theories and teaching approaches of the group of methodologies called Silent Way, Counseling-Learning, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, and Comprehension Training. Increasingly, they are being interpreted as removed from the larger concerns of language teaching, as procedures dealing with trivial issues and not with the critical substance of language teaching and learning. Whatever their contributions, Professor Jack Richards says that they are founded on a "weak empirical basis," and he has emphasized in "The secret life of methods," a plenary address at TESOL-Ontario, later published in the TESOL Quarterly--the need for "accountability and evaluation" through rigorous scientific experimentation to replace what he sees as the "unsubstantiated and often irrelevant claims of methods promoters" (1984:21).

I'm sure that we can all agree with Professor Richards about the desirability of both accountability and evaluation, but I don't believe that we can arrive at those ends via the route he recommends, primarily,

a "true experimental design." He points out (relative to communicative language teaching) that as yet "no studies have been undertaken ... to demonstrate that classrooms [using the target language] . . are indeed more conducive to successful language learning than classrooms in which the teacher dominates much of the teaching time or where the primary focus of activities is on more controlled and less creative uses of language (1984:19). He admits but rejects the "intuitive appeal of claims for the value of natural communication" because they are supported merely by "anecdotal evidence." Richards points to the recent articles of Michael Long as an example of "carefully designed research," and we can easily agree. Long does us a great service in an article which points out the importance of classroom-centered research as the basis for analysis of "process" and "product" in ESL program evaluation, as well as in a second one, analyzing the research done in assessing the role of language instruction in language achievement. In the first article, "Process and Product in ESL program evaluation," he goes into meticulous detail to demonstrate why "an exclusively product-oriented evaluation ...is inadequate" for evaluating language programs: "Product evaluations cannot distinguish among the many possible explanations for the results they obtain because they focus on the product of a program while ignoring the process by which that product came about" (1984:413). Later, however, in analyzing process, he cites the work of Swaffar et al, who conclude in disappointment about their research: "...defining methodologies in terms of the characteristic activities has led to distinctions which are ... not confirmable in classroom practice." He says also that "similarly depressing results have been obtained in two classroom-centered studies

of the effects on classroom language use of ... (supposedly) different types of teaching materials" (1984:421). Thus, although the "depressing" results are traced and attributed to insufficient understanding on the part of the personnel conducting the classes, the results are still depressing; that is, they don't provide the results hoped for.

In Professor Long's second article, on the question of whether second-language instruction makes a difference in language learning, there is the same close analysis of the various studies he is reviewing; for example, the absence of "inferential statistics" in the Hale and Budar study and other "flaws" are sufficient "to invalidate any claims they might wish to make" (1983:364). Their claim, incidentally, was that "exposure only" students did better than "ESL-instructed" students (1970). In Long's study, all the results that support the view that exposure is as powerful a factor as, if not more powerful than, instruction are subjected to a scrutiny and analysis which makes them seem vague and inconclusive. There is no suggestion that Professor Long distorts the results of those studies; apparently no study has been carefully enough designed so that the results can be conclusive. One may suggest, however, that possibly no study can ever be that carefully designed, if the subjects are humans behaving in individually normal ways. Overall, his attempt to analyze the relationship between and the priority of importance of instruction and exposure goes as far as it can. His criteria for admissibility of results are linked tightly to accuracy of design and of statistical procedure; he therefore finds various instances of unsupported or dubiously interpreted results. One cannot argue with the legitimacy of Long's approach without rejecting careful scientific scrutiny, but one can offer a timid plea that common sense occasionally justifies our intuitions: while the method of analysis may

be reasonable, the data cannot be complete. The data are selected always on the basis of their being familiar, recognizable, quantifiable factors. But we know also--even if intuitively--that there are many other factors, in every situation that we analyze: vague, individual, random, capricious, and unstable. We cannot pretend they don't exist just because we can't label, define, and hold them constant. One can react very positively to this reasonable, although not scientific, comment near the end of his meticulously-reasoned article: "Put rather crudely, instruction is good for you, regardless of your proficiency level, of the wider linguistic environment in which you receive it, and of the type of test you are going to perform on" (1983:379). His final paragraph expresses a pervasive and perhaps permanent problem: "...Even if, as I hope, the data on instruction have been correctly interpreted here, they're obviously not as clear-cut or as 'positive' as most TESOL professionals would like" (1983:380). And while he points out that "there is obviously a genuine need for further research" on his basic point and related points, we may feel, without being anti-intellectual and anti-scientific, that this further research may never produce the kind of ideal findings that some continue to wish for. It is even possible that the need for those findings really isn't so crucial.

If, however, one insists that such information is really crucial, that methods or sub-routines of methods must prove themselves empirically, then we can in turn insist that the following criteria be met:

1. A consensus must be reached on what the constructs or traits of competence of any kind are. They must be identified and described fully.

2. A consensus must be reached on what elicitation procedures are

to be used to elicit test data.

3. Tests must be given to a randomly selected pool of subjects who have been taught ESL (in this case) by a specific method and to a similar pool who have been taught by other contrasting methods, the two pools being absolutely identical except for teaching method.

4. Data must be elicited from both groups in accordance with steps 1 and 2.

5. The data must be analyzed by statistical procedures and these data must meet all the assumptions of the statistics.

Steps 1 and 2--basic to a design--haven't been done, and step 3 may be impossible. The studies which have been done cannot be truly compared because they have tested "language-like" behavior only, and the designs of the experiments are so divergent that the crucial variables cannot be isolated. The findings cited above are at best working hypotheses for further truly experimental research. In short, one may contend that no one has done any definitive empirical research yet on the efficiency of language-teaching methods.

Still, it is certainly true that studies like those of Professor Long's , based on classroom-centered research, are miles ahead of the vast projects conducted 15 and 20 years ago, projects like the Scherer-Wertheimer Colorado study comparing the Grammar-Translation method and the ALM, and the Pennsylvania project supervised by Phillip Smith, comparing the ALM and the "cognitive" approach. But all too often, in spite of attempts at careful research design and a principled attempt to control both process and product, the results are more often disappointing than cheering. Just as Professor Long is justified in using factors he considers valid to cast doubt on the accuracy of the results of the relative importance of "instruction" versus "exposure to

language," so may we insist that all the indefinite, vague, idiosyncratic, hitherto unquantified factors whose existence we know of although we can't specify their precise shapes--all of these may invalidate the neat outcomes of "careful experimental designs" which by choice or by default tend to ignore their existence. Professor Long says "the answer isn't as convincing as we could wish," while Professor Mark Clarke says "the teacher should pay attention to what works and what doesn't" (implying that "scientific studies" may or may not be valid for the teacher) (1982:448). So we aren't being too audacious in saying that we believe an approach or method is productive if our intuitions and experiences as teachers tell us it is productive. (In fairness to Professor Long, it should be pointed out that he doesn't claim success in using such verification procedures, only faith in the eventual success of such analysis.)

At this juncture, we may become aware of a genuine dilemma that our profession is faced with. In 1966 Chomsky offered the well-quoted opinion that "there is very little in psychology or linguistics that [the language teacher] ... can accept on faith." "Teachers, in particular, have a responsibility to make sure that ideas and proposals are evaluated on their merits, and not passively accepted on grounds of authority, real or presumed.... It is the language teacher himself who must validate or refute any specific proposal" (1966:43). In response to this, we have as a profession encouraged and succeeded in generating our own cadre of researchers and analysts in language-related issues, linguistic, psycholinguistic, and pedagogical. An excellent recent summary of this development is given by Professors Krahnke and Christison in a recent TQ article (1983). Professor Richard's contribution to methods analysis and

Professor Long's to classroom-centered research are both soundly motivated and they provide clear stimuli for continuing self-examination within our profession. This self-examination will eventually lead to believable and applicable findings, we can be certain, but it may be some time before results yield solid bases to which teachers can relate their overall approach, their specific methods, and precise techniques in language teaching. And there is a danger that too-much-too-soon positions insufficiently substantiated by our own researchers and analysts will be as tyrannical as those positions that Chomsky warned against.

A further aspect of this dilemma is the role and function of people like Curran, Gattegno, Lozanov, Asher, and Winitz. All of them are outsiders to the language-teaching profession, but since they have all dedicated an important part of their professional lives to the concerns of teaching language, they ought certainly to be considered at least honorary members of our profession. Their attempts to extract valid psychological and procedural premises for the population of language learners surely entitles them to that. We might even feel gratitude that psychologists, educationists, and counselors have been willing to break into our relatively closed ranks. Prof. Richards contends that Asher, Curran, and Gattegno "were prompted not by reactions to linguistic or sociolinguistic theories but rather by their personal philosophies of how an individual's learning potential can be maximized" (1984:11). Considering that at least Asher and Curran, as well as Lozanov, clearly enunciate what seem to be obvious sociolinguistic dicta about the handicap of the average language student--stress, insecurity, fear of involvement in class, and fear of failure--one may be puzzled by what a "reaction to a sociolinguistic theory" has to be. Does the fact that they don't quote Brown or Schumann--both of whom they all

precede--invalidate their ideas? And aren't Gattegno's and Lozanov's ideas about learning potential not worth a somewhat more dignified label than "personal philosophies"?

It may be true that none of these innovators reacted to linguistic theory per se. So much the better perhaps. A reliance upon linguistic theory is too easily equated with the unacceptable position that the linguist is the source of all useful information about what and how people learn. Counseling-Learning is flawed, Professor Richards implies, because, like TPR, it is "predicated upon assumptions about how people best learn rather than on theories about the nature of language" (1984:12). Actually, this may be a rather good idea: some people think that theories about the nature of language are relatively useless in offering generalizations about how people learn, and too often they simply provoke sub-theories, variable and capricious, about the rule-content and the sequencing of rules in a pedagogical grammar.

The last point one might make about these "outsiders" is in connection with Professor Richard's observation that these methods "operate without an explicit syllabus model" (1984:11). A model is at least implicit in the 159-hour lessons that Asher offers in his Learning another language through actions (1982), the 150 half-hour lessons of Gattegno for his English-through-videotape series, the 120-hour course with dialogues in Suggestopedia (described in Bancroft, 1975), the four-book series called the Learnables for Harris Winitz's Comprehension Training (1981). Even in Counseling-Learning with its student-generated dialogues, the moderately skilled counselor-teacher can easily organize those materials into a grammar-plus-practice-plus-activity text--not a pre-shaped syllabus, admittedly, but still a syllabus in an important

intrinsic sense.

A discussion of syllabus and text calls to mind Peter Strevens' idealist view: "The very best teachers rely rather little upon materials prepared by other people, often making their own improvements or replacements and using the prescribed textbooks only as a general guide. The poorest teachers, on the other hand, rely totally on the teaching materials and are only as effective as the textbooks permit them to be" (1977:31).

Another part of the dilemma mentioned earlier is the polarity of the scientist-methodologist and the classroom teacher. On the one hand we have Professor Richard's statement of the maximum obligation of the supporter of a method--"Once an instructional theory takes the form of a method, with theoretical bases in language and learning theory and operationalized practices in syllabus design and teaching procedures, claims made at each level of method organization must be regarded as hypotheses awaiting verification or falsification" (1984:20)--on the other hand we have a less stringent, more moderate view like that expressed by Professor Mark Clarke, who after warning us about bandwagons and the "gurus who come and go," concludes that "as ESL teachers, as professionals, we should look to our own experiences in the classroom and measure our own successes and failures for evidence of what works and [what] doesn't work" (1982:447-448). From this one concludes that Professor Clarke would accept ideas-that-work, regardless of whether they come from gurus or from eminent and established members within the profession.

Do others believe that we can verify or falsify the claims of new methods as rigorously as Professor Richards says we must do? Here are comments by other members of our profession on that topic. Alan Maley,

in his witty and incisive paper at Honolulu TESOL, "'I got religion!': evangelism in TEFL," says (specifically about SW, CLL, and Suggestopedia, but also about teaching methods and approaches generally), "Like any teaching/learning theory, they are not open to the principle of verification because the number of variables is too large to be held constant. Likewise they are not open to ... [Popper's] criterion of falsifiability since they are not framed in such a way as to be tested. They are, scientifically speaking, neither true nor false, since no [truly] adequate tests can be performed upon them" (1983:81). In spite of his distrust of slogans and of musny aphorisms about the sensitivity and delicacy of the language learner, Maley doesn't believe that the scientific procedures espoused by Richards are possible.

It is clearly undesirable, not to say dangerous, to take a position against "true experimental design" and "carefully designed research"; in our field we have as much obligation to careful analysis and evaluation of our procedures and our products as in any other field. But it is realistic and not anti-scientific to conclude, however reluctantly, as does Peter Strevens, that "twenty-five years of [critical, evaluative] experiments reveal only the multiplicity of confounding variables and the astonishing particularity of [each] separate school, class, teacher, and learner. The lessons to be learned from research are clear and repeated: first, it is extremely difficult to design experiments in comparative methodology that are not falsified by unforeseen or fortuitous circumstances, and second, the great variability of learning-teaching situations may render the results of any single valid experiment only partially applicable to the precise conditions in which particular learners are working elsewhere" (1977:4). We can continue to search for

a metric by which to evaluate the impact of instruction, gains, and second-language maturation in the student, but if we believe at all that learning and not teaching is what ultimately accounts for control of another language, we have to temper our faith in teacher, syllabus, and curriculum and increase our respect for the learners, who are almost always a frustratingly unquantifiable complex in their totality.

Other members of our profession comment on the product of their careful analyses and research and the confounding factors. One admires the concluding remarks of Professor Savile-Troike in her "retrospective analysis" of research into the ESL achievement of a group of children as much as the research itself. She points out that "no cause and effect relationships can be claimed" about their "very different levels of achievement in English-medium instruction at the end of that year" (1984:200), and she says that "perhaps the most important point to be made from the analyses ... is the extent to which there were individual differences among the subjects. Statistics for groups of students too often can mask what is actually happening to individuals as they succeed or fail in learning English..." (1984:215). (Her conclusions are actually broader and involve the relationship between ESL and academic achievement.)

Considering what is required of the language learner, the complexity of activity required for organization of input and intake, we can easily agree with Professor Savile-Troike about the difficulty of establishing cause-effect relationships and the magnitude of the individual differences among students.

The complex of language processing is not just another scientific abstraction subject to scientific analysis. Widdowson's interpretation of reading, which is "not a reaction to a text [and therefore teachable] but

as interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text" (1979:174), points to this complexity. And so does Malcolm Coulthard when he says of "discoursal meaning" that "the language teacher cannot hope to explain ... [it] in the traditionally regarded 'cut-and-dried' way of teaching grammatical rules," that "ways of teaching should shift from teacher-telling to learner interpreting.... Learners need to become analysts of discourse themselves" (1977-xii-xiii). My points are first, that any attempt at measuring such personal interaction by rigorous means will be extremely difficult to manage, and second, that the importance of the learner's responsibility cannot be overemphasized. The teacher can describe the geography and explain where the road is supposed to go; after that the student sets out relatively alone. Often the teacher can only observe the student's progress and report on it--anecdotally.

Certain reservations having been established, one may agree more easily that the innovative approaches should provide evaluative studies (although one can continue to believe that language teaching methodologists are not required to test their methods the way the EPA tests cars for pollution). Ultimately, these studies should be forthcoming either from the practitioners themselves or from others. But one may continue to insist on the difficulty of securing true empirical data, as well as to maintain the validity of these methods founded in the complex affective domain of the language learner. The primary obstacle is trying to find a measuring system for what Chastain calls "the hesitation and misgivings many people have about treading new waters as they move into a different linguistic and cultural world" (1976:282). Chastain expresses a familiar but important fact about the affective domain: the "problem in dealing with attitudes and feelings is the

multitude of intangibles involved. This lack of specificity causes some educators to shy away from a serious consideration of [it]" (1976:177). He points out the appropriateness of phenomenological studies of these factors. The problem is how many phenomenologists do we have in our profession? (And how welcome would they be these days?)

Regardless of how successful we are in measuring or even in specifying the affective component, it is pretty much taken for granted that we are dealing with something of great importance. Chastain emphasizes that "some psychologists [maintain] that the influence of attitudes and feelings is a greater contributing factor in determining student achievement and success than the cognitive" (1976:176). Tracy Terrell makes the truly sweeping statement that "the evidence at this point [i.e. 1977] indicates that the primary factors which influence L2 acquisition are affective, not cognitive" (1977:328). In 1982, he said, "I am even more convinced that the lowering of affective barriers must be the overriding concern in classroom activities if acquisition is to be achieved" (1982:124). In reviewing research Krahnke and Christison say that "there is general agreement within the field that social and affective factors have a major effect on who learns languages and how well they learn them.... For all language learners, affective factors influence the ability to use new languages spontaneously and effectively" (1983:639).

(These views are probably all based on what Professor Richards would call anecdotal evidence. Surprisingly or not, very little research has been applied to affective components. John Oller's attempt to quantify motivation, in his article "Can affect be measured?" (1981), showed that adequate measuring instruments are lacking. Although, of course there were Guiora et al's experiments to determine how many cocktails

facilitated student success in pronouncing Thai words (1972). The jury is still out deciding the relationship between ego-permeability and pronunciation and language-acquisition in general [e.g. Schumann, 1975].)

This absence of specific application of studies of the affective factors and their impact on the language-teaching classroom may not be too surprising if we realize that the history of our awareness is not very long. When Doug Brown began writing about "affective factors" in 1973, he wasn't exactly a lone voice crying in the wilderness, but there weren't many people echoing (but see Schumann 1975 and 1978). Rigorous analyses are few, and the application of research procedures to those factors has been meager. Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic premises and hypotheses figure strongly in our discussions of teaching and learning procedures, but it may not be unfair to say that except possibly for a few areas of recent intense research--schema theory, for instance--they have not arrived at the status of hard sciences: demonstration, proof, replicability. To look at it a different way, if affect cannot be measured successfully, who should we bother trying to construct rigorous experiments? Still, we are aware beyond argument of its existence, and we acknowledge its importance, so is it reasonable that out of frustration with its tenuousness we challenge or reject it? If affective factors are very important--or even "most important," as some of our colleagues say, perhaps we should simply accept them, together with our ignorance about their specific workings, until there is some breakthrough thanks to as yet unknown measuring insruments. It may be more reasonable to accept what Professor Richards calls "the sanction of [Earl] Stevick's uncritical treatment" (1984:15) of what he found in the Silent Way and Counseling-learning than to reject them because their claims couldn't be

verified by means of "true experimental design." And yet Professor Richards concludes that "the field of methods in language teaching has been revitalized by different theories concerning the nature of language, by new theories concerning the central process of language acquisition, by innovative proposals for syllabus development and the design of instructional systems,... [and] the use of a variety of novel practices, techniques, and procedures in the language classroom" (1984:21). And Alan Maley, after poking fun at the evangelism of these innovative methods and their "ritual set of procedures, a priesthood,...and a body of holy writ and commentary," points with fairness to the "positive insights" they have provided: "the independent and individual role and status of the learner," "the importance of group supportiveness ... [as a] security system for learning," "the importance of relaxation and the reduction of threat," "the hidden capacity of the human brain ... and the important role of peripheral and subconscious learning," "the role of play," "the view of error and its correction," "the importance of building inner criteria," and "creative silence." He adds that the "list is not complete," and "we owe [these innovators] ... collectively an enormous debt" (1983:81-82). Maley also provides us with a reasonable basis for suspicion about the methodologies he discusses (i.e. SW, CLL, and Suggestopedia)--a reservation shared in part by Professors Richards, Clarke, and Scovel in their comments: we can believe in "their value as language learning paradigms ... so long ... as no one of them lays claim to total truth" (1983:83). We can consider that a fair enough reservation.

Still, the appropriate proportion of sensitivity to the personal qualities and needs of the individual learner is by no means a universally-accepted premise. Tom Scovel, also speaking at Honolulu

TESOL, concedes that the innovative methods, together with the Notional-Functional syllabus, have made a "positive contribution to language pedagogy," but he considers the American humanistic approach to pedagogy to be the "typically American worship of individualism," especially as advocated by Earl Stevick (1983:90). And the priority of importance conceded to the affective domain isn't always the highest. Francine M. Schumann and John H. Schumann discuss in interesting detail some of their personal problems -preferences, hang-ups, resentments, withdrawal--in their "Diary of a language learner," emphasizing various affective elements and their importance. They caution, however, that "as the profession comes to recognize more and more the importance of affective factors in SLL, there is the danger that language teachers will assume the roles of pseudo-psychologists and language classes will become group therapy sessions." They point out the essential importance of "an awareness of the affective nature of SLL," but "we must be careful not to neglect the importance of grammar, drill, and the other traditional components of language instruction" (1977:248). Considering the track record of "grammar, drill, and the other traditional components of language instruction," perhaps we ought not to hesitate too much about the teacher's intervention in learners' problems; those problems--Terrell's "affective barriers"--aren't going anywhere if teacher and students both don't make some attempt to solve them. "Pseudo-psychology" and "group therapy sessions" are unsympathetic labels for attitudes and procedures that may be far more productive than grammar and drills.

Let us take for granted a general belief in the existence of and importance of Affect. By <u>affect</u>, let us understand everything that isn't obviously a part of the cognitive-intellectual complex, lumping together

social factors, affective factors, and personal factors--in short, attitudes, language and culture shock, motivation and the lack of it, self-image, self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal, discouragement, loss of interest and involvement, rejection, alienation, lack of confidence, fear of failure. Whether these factors exist before or develop during contact with language learning isn't important, except perhaps to the sociolinguist. Through observation we can be sure of the existence of various components of this conglomerate, even if we're not sure how to identify them specifically; after all, we're language teachers, not psychologists, and precise identification isn't our goal.

It is also reasonable to suggest that we dignify the observation that we're all capable of--or at least of becoming capable of through sensitization--as just that: observational analysis. There is a tendency in those who believe only in empirical data to reject such observation, to cheapen it with the label of "anecdotal." This is not a necessary position: many observations and retrospective analyses have eventually produced more respected empirically-based evidence and conclusion.

Many people have contributed to our understanding of the affective side of our students, and we have been brought to awareness not so very long ago from a position that can be called unawareness of and insensitivity to the affective life within those students. Among these people are the innovators of the methods under discussion, and their contribution as a group has been a massive and powerful one. They have been practicing on the fringes while our profession slowly grew into awareness--in large measure because of Earl Stevick, who has a singularly open mind.

Perhaps we can even concede that larger curricular concerns per se

aren't dealt with significantly beyond the initiation and induction of the student into the domain of the foreign language. But these reassuring, calming, gentling, and mind-awakening procedures have turned out to be far from trivial and irrelevant to learning. Let's call those methods "approaches" if we feel that curriculum and syllabus and precise techniques aren't sufficiently stabilized yet to earn them the title of true method. But even as approaches, Silent Way, Counseling-Learning, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, and Comprehension Training provide an impressive entrée to a foreign language. They usually create an awareness among learners that the cultural, psychological, and social barriers which have practically become part of the psyche of modern language students can be overcome. In their varied ways and through different channels, they give the learner the security and confidence that most teachers find lacking in most learners. Perhaps once the learners find that learning actually occurs, it doesn't matter very much how a curriculum unfolds afterwards. After all, Gattegno calls teacher silence just a tool which makes the mind of the student work harder, Curran and Rardin consider the counselor's function to be the facilitation of the learner's capability rather than "language teaching," Asher and Winitz have shown that the learner's silent physical response (and the silent response to Winitz's picture stories) solidifies comprehension--that often-neglected skill--and triggers other language-skill development, and Lozanov's apparent rigamarole is in the service of overcoming the "anti-suggestive barriers," which he sees as a powerful educational principle which allows the mind to become engaged more profoundly and more efficiently in learning.

It is obvious, and therefore not necessary to confess, that much of

the preceding is, as Professor Richards says, "promoting and justifying these methods through reference to intuitively appealing assertions and theories" (1984:19). Nonetheless, that stance is appropriate in supporting the idea that the approach, that is, the underlying principles, of these methods is at least as important as the techniques themselves.

At this point it is necessary to retract some of the concession made about the simple entrée into the language provided by these innovators, and their lack of concern with "larger curricular matters." That statement is unfair to those people who have continued to construct what we could call "intermediate levels" for these methods, materials we have seen in print by Asher (1982), La Forge (1982), Contee Seelye (1982), Bertha Segal (1981), Harris Winitz (1981), and others. And on the subject of empirical research, we should also note James Asher's numerous well-designed experiments aimed at defining the parameters of achievement in learning and retention by various groups in various activities related to TPR (e.g. Asher 1969a, 1969b, 1977; Asher and Price 1967; Asher, Kusudo, and de la Torre 1974; Kunihira and Asher 1965).

The conclusion of this paper will be anecdotal, summarizing how these methods— or approaches--deal with the rights and obligations of the learners. The innovators have recognized the power of negative thinking in learning, and they have incorporated procedures and constructed environments intended to overcome, correct, and manipulate these negative factors, either nullifying them, thwarting them, correcting them, or making useful positive qualities of them. Teachers of these methods remain sensitive to the impulses of the learners, they monitor their activities and responses in a different way from the usual "teacher will fix" way, they foster the students' desire to learn, they allow them to

be excited by new things, they heighten the emotional comfort of the learner--they do lots of unusually nice things to and for the learner. Attention is paid to soothing the learner and minimizing anxiety: new identities and biographies are given out in Suggestopedic sessions (and the student's view is that "it's Monsieur Duval from Marseilles who just said that awkward sentence, not me"); there's no pressure to answer at once in Silent Way (and the student feels "I am entitled to take my time or even pass if I don't want my turn"); the teacher doesn't want the learner to talk in TPR and in Comprehension Training (but the student may say "If I can't resist the urge, I can talk under my breath"); and there's no obligation to participate in a conversation in a Counseling-learning session (and the student may say, "The rest of the group don't care if I don't grab the microphone; there's that much more time for the others who do want to talk").

Asher, Winitz (e.g. 1981), the late Valerian Postovsky (1974, 1981), and the late Judy Olmsted Gary (1975) accept the premise (after demonstrating its validity) that the delay of speaking minimizes stress in the learner, and they see the benefits of saving the learner from that stress while studying a language. In spite of the irregular fact that no one is talking as in the usual language class, measurable learning is going on without anyone suffering from the usual hangups of stress, anxiety, and discouragement. The sense of achievement at being able to follow commands precisely or being able to follow picture stories with full understanding substitutes confidence and pride for the other, commonly occurring negative feelings. The achievement is measured, of course, by successful response to the commands and successful results in the half-hourly quizzes of Winitz's program (1981:passim).

The Silent Way teacher helps, forces, allows the independence of the learners, who slowly become aware of their capabilities. They do all the work, take the responsibility for what they do, and they get the credit for what they learn. Each member of the group being in the same boat, sweating out the same problems, they quickly learn to accept each other, help each other, and learn from each other. Discovering that they can actually figure out what they're supposed to learn, they begin to take pride in their abilities, and not having the constant mirror of what they've done in the teacher's modeling, they see their individual achievement and feel proud of it. Shaping and reshaping their own product, they don't need the artificial support of the "real" form that is usually provided by the teacher--along with the inevitable invidious comparison that it provokes.

Counseling-Learning allows the student to be cautious and non-receptive until s/he believes it appropriate, desirable, and safe to be receptive; no time limit is placed on the attitude of self-defense. The Counselor-teacher demands nothing, having the role of a willing implement in the hands of the learners. What the learners want to learn makes up the lesson, the pace they want to go at establishes the pace. They learn--faster or slower--the role of cooperation, interdependence, and trust in themselves, their companions, and the instructor/counselor; this acceptance teaches them to take chances in learning and in expressing themselves; and the language becomes a meaningful part of their lives, at least within their "community."

Suggestopedia allows the student to relax totally, to be unstressed in the face of masses of language material, to be as cuddled as a child by pleasant surroundings and by invitations to remember only happy times, to stretch and get the kinks out of the adult body by exercising as

preparation for learning, to have a strong and reliable authority figure of a teacher whose power is only positve, to be led to believe that their mental capability is far greater than anyone else has told them it was.

The common denominators among these approaches are simple and even banal: they focus in a very determined way on the individual learners, and they provide a lot of nurture for the learners. At first, it often seems that each of these methods is doing something different from the others—until we look at the learners. If they can be satisfied, working contentedly with a sense of achievement and confidence in their linguistic future, whether they're talking or being silent, whether they're guessing wildly or assembling their structures methodically and painstakingly, whether they're following or leading, then we can believe that the product will be a lot more learning, proportionate with the individual's overall capabilities, naturally. In short, learning will be optimized. The one thing we cannot afford is to get fed up and impatient with these affective needs: we have to cater to them, and each of these approaches does that according to its best interpretation. If they contradict each other in some point of handling the overall task, that's probably all right: after all, we're dealing with a species that is capable of being happy one day, sad the next, tolerant one hour, impatient the next, cheerful one minute, surly the next.

We must avoid the temptation to be too scientific about the entity under discussion, the language student. And while we may continue to desire and aim for careful studies of the processes and results of these methods, we should also continue to respect their intentions and their successes. The "multitude of intangibles" will always be there. It is reasonable to invite teachers to examine these methods before accepting

them, but it is unreasonable to warn them away from them.

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